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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ

Summary

-- The lead story in all papers published today, August 2, focuses on King Abdullah's visit to Thailand. Other lead stories continue to highlight the ongoing situation in Iraq, focusing on the car explosions outside churches and the developments on the Jordanian hostage front. All papers highlight the Jordanian government spokesperson's reaction to reported Israeli objections to a U.S.-Jordan air-to-air missiles deal as "an Israeli response to Jordan's effectiveness in opposing Israel's construction of the separation wall in the West Bank".

Editorial Commentary

-- "Multi-religious troops for Iraq!"

Daily columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back-page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (08/02): "U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's recent visit to the Middle East encountered some success, since he got approval to send Islamic troops to Iraq to function under the umbrella of the American forces or independently in coordination with the multinational troops that seem to be turning into multi-religious troops.. Up to now, the official Arab stand has been clear: Arab troops will not go into Iraq as long as there is an occupation so that they do not come into confrontation with the Iraqi people for the benefit of America, but they could go into Iraq to replace occupation forces when they pull out and upon Iraq's request. The Iraqi resistance will not welcome Arab and Muslim forces with open arms. They target everyone who works or cooperates with the occupation, and even Iraqis are not excluded. The Islamic troops for which Colin Powell got approval to send to Iraq will be a target for the resistance, because they are going to Iraq at a time when troops of other countries, which America dragged into its war, are pulling out.. The Arab and Muslim military intervention in Iraq means raising Arab weapons in the face of an Arab people. It also means that the countries involved in the American project are exposing themselves to becoming an arena for local and imported terrorism. No interest is served if any Arab or Muslim government volunteers to serve the American project at the expense of its own principles, interests and security."

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